W. Bicknell. S. A.

PREACHING CHRIST, AND NOT SELF. Ponders-end

6,

A

SERMON

PREACHED

At Tuckers-Street-Meeting, BRISTOL,

AT THE

ORDINATION

OF

The Reverend Mr. *THOMAS JANES.*

MAY 26th, 1774.

By *BENJAMIN FAWCETT,* M. A.

To which are added,

Mr. *Janes*'s CONFESSION of FAITH,

And a CHARGE,

Delivered on the ſame OCCASION.

By *ANDREW KINSMAN.*

SHREWSBURY:

Printed by J. EDDOWES; and ſold by W. PINE, T. CADELL, and W. WARD, in *Briſtol*; and by J. BUCKLAND, in Pater-noſter-Row, *London.*

[Price ONE SHILLING.]

1803.

BRISTOL, June 9th, 1774.

It is requeſted by us, whoſe names are under-written, together with the church and congregation at Tuckers-Street-Meeting to which we belong, that the Rev. Mr. *Fawcett* print his Sermon, and the Rev. Mr. *Kinſman* his Charge, delivered at the ordination of Mr. *Janes*.

Thomas Janes, *Miniſter.*

Edward Garlick,
Richard Callwell,
Benjamin Gillam,
} *Deacons.*

BRITISH MUSEUM

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 5.

For we preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord; and ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus' ſake.

THIS is a declaration peculiarly fit for apoſtles, and perfectly ſuitable to their holy, ſelf-denying and heavenly temper and character. Thus they gave a glorious confirmation to the truths of the goſpel, magnified their chriſtian miniſtry, and ſilenced gain-ſayers. And in proportion as the ordinary miniſters of Chriſt can really apply this declaration to themſelves, the ſame bleſſed effects will follow. Unſpeakably inferiour, my reverend brethren, as we are to apoſtles, yet 'woe 'unto us,' if we do not approve ourſelves to GOD and conſcience, by our imbibing their temper, and acting upon their principles.

Even the conduct of apoſtles was often miſtaken or miſrepreſented. Therefore St. *Paul* found it neceſſary to vindicate himſelf and his fellow-labourers, by explaining the excellent nature and tendency of their miniſtrations, in which they ſolemnly diſclaimed all ſiniſter views. 'We are unto GOD,' ſays he, 'a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, in them that are 'ſaved, and in them that periſh. To the one, 'we are the ſavour of death unto death; and 'to the other, the ſavour of life unto life.'

A miniſtry big with ſuch infinitely important conſequences, filled him with dread, and obliged him to cry out, 'Who is ſufficient for theſe things?' But the moſt abaſing thoughts of inſufficiency to anſwer ſuch grand purpoſes, were perfectly conſiſtent with the moſt ſcrupulous claim to integrity. Therefore the apoſtle adds, 'We are not as 'many, which corrupt the word of GOD; 'but as of ſincerity, but as of GOD, in the 'ſight of GOD ſpeak we in Chriſt.* He more largely proſecutes this noble vindication in the third and fourth chapters of this epiſtle; but the whole of it may be conſidered as included in the expreſſive language of my text; where every word is ſo full of important ſentiments, that a very imperfect illuſtration of them will oblige us to pay ſome attention to the following heads of diſcourſe.

Firſt, To ſhew that faithful miniſters of the goſpel make it their grand concern to preach Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.

Secondly, That they dread the thought of preaching themſelves, inſtead of Chriſt.

Thirdly, That while they preach Chriſt, and not themſelves, they are themſelves the ſervants of immortal ſouls. And,

Fourthly, That their principal motive for engaging in ſuch ſervice of immortal ſouls, is for Jeſus' ſake.

I. In

* 2 Cor. ii. 15—17.

I. In order to ſhew, how the faithful miniſters of the goſpel make it their grand concern to preach Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, it is almoſt neceſſary to obſerve concerning them, —that by faith and love they have previouſly received Chriſt, as their own Saviour and Lord;—that they are ſatisfied of Chriſt's having called them to the ſacred office of preaching him to their fellow-mortals; — that they reſolve Chriſt ſhall be the principal ſubject of all their preaching;—and that their leading deſign in preaching Chriſt, is to prevail upon their hearers, to truſt in him as a Saviour, and to obey him as a Lord and ruler.

1. We are to obſerve concerning the faithful miniſters of the goſpel, that by faith and love they have previouſly received Chriſt, as their own Saviour and Lord. To preach Chriſt, is, in an eminent degree to ſerve him, and promote his cauſe and intereſt. Faithfully to do this, muſt ſuppoſe that we are the real ſervants of Chriſt. The apoſtles could appeal to their divine maſter, 'Lo, we have left all, 'and have followed thee.' * They could deliberately profeſs, 'We alſo believe, and there-'fore ſpeak.' † They conſidered it as a thing utterly inconſiſtent with their faithful preaching of Chriſt, to be at any time negligent of their own perſonal intereſt in Chriſt, and of their ſincere devotedneſs to him. Therefore,

* Mark x. 28. † 2 Cor. iv. 13

St. *Paul* takes care to diſtinguiſh between thoſe who 'preached Chriſt of contention, not 'ſincerely, and others of love.'* Accordingly all the faithful miniſters of the goſpel have themſelves been firſt deeply convinced of their own guilt and miſery without Chriſt, that he was ſent of GOD for their own ſalvation, that he is both able and willing to ſave them to the uttermoſt, and has therefore the moſt undoubted right to their ſincere and univerſal obedience. Under ſuch convictions as theſe, they have cordially accepted of Chriſt, as he is offered to them in the goſpel; they have truſted their own immortal all in his hands; and have engaged themſelves to him, as their own Lord and ruler. Thus, in order to be faithful preachers of Chriſt, they are firſt of all chriſtians indeed, 'by repentance toward GOD, 'and by faith toward our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.' Hence it comes to paſs, that they preach not an 'unknown' Saviour and Lord; but one, who is the 'life' of their own ſouls, and who is 'made of GOD unto themſelves for wiſdom, 'and righteouſneſs, and ſanctification, and re-'demption.'

2. Faithful Miniſters are well-perſuaded, that Chriſt has called them to the ſacred office of preaching him to their fellow-mortals. Though they pretend not to be called, as the apoſtles were, immediately by Chriſt, and to be miraculouſly qualified for their work by the

† Philip. i. 16, 17.

the Holy Spirit; yet they can ſatisfactorily trace their call in the ordinary methods of divine providence, guiding and determining their inclinations to this publick ſervice for Chriſt and ſouls, aſſiſting them with ſome competent meaſure of natural and acquired abilities, and rendering their ſervices acceptable and uſeful in the churches. Their ſerious and careful attention to theſe ordinary intimations of divine providence, added to their own fervent prayers and ſolemn ſelf dedications, together with the advices and prayers of others in their behalf, are ſo many concurrent circumſtances, which enable them, at leaſt, with a moral certainty to conclude, that 'they preach, becauſe they are 'ſent.'† Well-perſuaded that the Lord has thus called them to be the miniſters of his goſpel, they chearfully engage in the awful employment, and feel their hearts animated to it by every principle of love and gratitude to Chriſt, and unreſerved ſubjection to his authority; of zeal for the glory of God, and the ſalvation of ſouls, as well as regard to their own ſalvation. They ever maintain ſuch high and honourable thoughts of their ſacred function, as to account their faithfulneſs in it, not only their indiſpenſible duty, but the ſource of their nobleſt pleaſures. Hence it naturally follows, that,

3. It is the determinate reſolution of faithful miniſters to make the Lord Jeſus Chriſt the

† Rom. x. 15.

the principal ſubject of all their preaching. Like the great apoſtle, 'they determine not to 'know any thing' comparatively 'among thoſe' to whom they preach, 'ſave Jeſus Chriſt, and 'him crucified.'* And their reſolution to preach Chriſt crucified, is for the reaſon which the ſame apoſtle aſſigns, becauſe 'it pleaſes 'God by the fooliſhneſs of preaching to ſave 'them that believe;' for tho' 'Chriſt crucified 'be unto the Jews a ſtumbling-block, and 'unto the Greeks fooliſhneſs;' yet 'unto them 'which are called, both Jews and Greeks, 'Chriſt is the power of God, and the wiſdom 'of God.'† While the great truths of natural religion muſt neceſſarily be explained and enforced, they muſt all of them ſtill lead to Chriſt, and center in him. Little would the doctrines of the being and the perfections of God avail to the ſalvation of ſinners, if he is not repreſented as 'in Chriſt a reconciled 'God,' and that 'no man cometh unto the 'Father' acceptably, 'but by Chriſt.'‡ Here then is the chief buſineſs of faithful miniſters; to ſhew the Lord Jeſus Chriſt as 'God ma-'feſt in the fleſh;'‖ and to illuſtrate the glories of his perſon and offices, his righteouſneſs, grace and government. They are to prove him to be the only Saviour of loſt ſinners, and the ſovereign Lord of all; to eſtabliſh the doctrines of his incarnation, death and reſurrection,

* 1 Cor. ii. 2. † 1 Cor. i. 21, 23, 24. ‡ John xiv. 6.
‖ 1 Tim. iii. 16.

rection, his mediation and interceſſion, eſpecially his atoning ſacrifice, his juſtifying righteouſneſs, and 'the unſearchable' riches of his grace. They are alſo to illuſtrate the purity and ſpirituality of his precepts, the perfection of his example, and the exceeding greatneſs and preciouſneſs of his promiſes. With the apoſtle, they even denounce a 'woe unto 'themſelves, if they preach not the goſpel,' * if they make not Chriſt the alpha and omega of every ſermon.—But to compleat the idea of their preaching Chriſt, one circumſtance more muſt be added; for,

4. The great deſign of faithful miniſters in preaching Chriſt is, that they may prevail upon their hearers, to truſt in him as their Saviour, and to obey him as their Lord and Ruler. Was it the grand deſign, for which the bleſſed 'God gave his only begotten Son, 'that whoſoever believeth in him, might not 'periſh, but have everlaſting life?' † Was it the very errand, for which 'Chriſt Jeſus came 'into the world, to ſave ſinners?' ‡ This therefore is the deſign of faithful miniſters in preaching Chriſt; on this errand they come to their hearers from ſabbath to ſabbath, 'in 'ſeaſon, and out of ſeaſon.' By every doctrine they explain, by every duty they inculcate, they are ſtill ſeeking to exalt Chriſt on the throne of men's hearts, and to 'bow their wills 'to

* 1 Cor. ix. 16. † John iii. 16. ‡ Tim. i. 15.

'to the obedience of faith, and ſo form Chriſt 'within them.' When they publiſh the glad tidings of ſalvation by Jeſus, they directly aim at the conviction and converſion of ſinners, if peradventure God may thereby 'open 'their eyes, and turn them from darkneſs to 'light, and from the power of Satan to him-'ſelf, that they may receive forgiveneſs of 'ſins, and inheritance among them which are 'ſanctified by faith that is in Chriſt Jeſus.' When they aſſert the authority of Chriſt, as 'the Lord of Lords, and the King of Kings,' their deſign is, 'that every knee ſhould bow to 'him, and every tongue confeſs him; that all 'men ſhould honour the Son, even as they 'honour the Father;' and 'that denying un-'godlineſs, and worldly luſts, they ſhould live 'ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly, in this pre-'ſent world.' Thus, by their preaching Chriſt Jeſus the Lord, they moſt effectually 'warn 'every man, and teach every man in all 'wiſdom, that they may preſent every man 'perfect in Chriſt Jeſus.'——We are next to conſider,

II. How faithful Miniſters dread the thought of preaching themſelves, inſtead of Chriſt Jeſus the Lord. It muſt at leaſt intimate,—their affecting ſenſe of the danger there is, leſt their preaching Chriſt ſhould be ſpoiled by inordinate ſelfiſhneſs;—and alſo their conſtant ſolicitude, that in all their preaching they may be

be enabled to ſacrifice every ſelfiſh view to the honour and intereſt of Chriſt.

1. We are to take notice, that faithful miniſters have a quick ſenſibility of the danger there is of having their preaching Chriſt ſpoiled by inordinate ſelfiſhneſs. As faithful miniſters are preſumed to be real chriſtians, they therefore muſt well-know their own hearts. They know that 'the heart is deceitful 'above all things, and deſperately wicked,' if left to its own corrupt inclinations; that to 'truſt in their own hearts, is' great 'folly'; that they ought always to 'take heed, leſt there be 'even in themſelves an evil heart of unbelief, 'in departing from the living GOD; and that 'they might not henceforth live unto them-'ſelves, but unto him which died for them, 'and roſe again.' As chriſtian preachers, their ſelf-acquaintance enables them to diſcern the continual danger, they are in, of having Chriſt rivalled by ſinful ſelf. And in proportion as ſelf rivals Chriſt in their preaching, they have the moſt formidable apprehenſions of the ſin and guilt incurred thereby. They tremble to think, how ſuch ſin and guilt muſt involve in it a proud, hypocritical, and rebellious uſurpation of the honours and prerogatives peculiar to their only rightful ſovereign, as well as the baſeſt ingratitude to their beſt benefactor and friend. With ſuch very alarming views of the ſinfulneſs of preaching themſelves, inſtead of Chriſt,

they exert their utmoſt attention and care, in order to diſcover and detect the various appearances of this inordinate ſelfiſhneſs. They plainly perceive, that it is no eaſy matter to trace all the inſtances of ſelfiſh preaching; ſince ſuch preaching includes in it every the leaſt deviation from Chriſt to ſelf; and eſpecially, ſince inordinate ſelfiſhneſs has a thouſand ways of inſinuating itſelf, and of eſtabliſhing its abominable influence. How often does ſuch preaching diſcover itſelf in an anxious concern for their own honour and applauſe, which they would have all men give to their learning and oratory, or to their zeal and diligence? At the ſame time, how negligent does it make them of the honour and intereſt of Chriſt, and the converſion of ſinners, or the edification of ſaints? How prevalent, yet plauſible, is this ſelfiſhneſs, when they preach with covetous deſires after filthy lucre? or, are graſping after earthly poſſeſſions? or, are aiming at worldly power and authority, in order to be Lords over God's heritage? or, perhaps are chiefly ſolicitous to live a life of eaſe and ſloth? or, are looking with envy at the more vigorous ſervices and ſuperiour talents of ſome of their brethren? or, are flaming with intemperate zeal for notions and parties? or, are ſinking into deſpondency by a ſlaviſh fear of man? Indeed the paſſions and prejudices are as various, as

they

they are deteſtable, by which Chriſt may be preached only in profeſſion, but themſelves in reality. If St. *Paul* had not been aware of this, he would not have ventured to ſay of the generality of preachers in that day, 'All 'ſeek their own, not the things which are 'Jeſus Chriſt's.'* Theſe are conſiderations, which are enough to make faithful miniſters tremble.——And therefore,

2. It is their earneſt endeavour, that in all their preaching they may ſacrifice every ſelfiſh view to the honour and intereſt of Chriſt. Well-knowing the deceitfulneſs of their own hearts, and the many ſnares and temptations with which they are more peculiarly encompaſſed, they judge their ſecurity and 'happi-'neſs' lies in 'fearing always;' in 'keeping 'their hearts with all diligence;' and in conſtant 'watchfulneſs and prayer, that they 'enter not into temptation.' Daily, in the preſence of God, and with godly jealouſy over themſelves, and with repeated ſolemn ſurrender of themſelves and all their miniſtrations to God and Chriſt, 'they renounce' with holy deteſtation 'the hidden things of diſhoneſty,' reſolving, in the ſtrength of divine grace, 'not 'to walk in craftineſs, nor handle the word 'of God deceitfully.† If a corrupt deſire or deſign ariſe in their hearts, they treat it as a traitor to their Lord, nor reſt, till by faith

* Philip. ii. 21. † 2 Cor. iv 2.

and prayer, by examining and humbling themſelves, they are enabled to 'ſanctify the 'Lord God in their hearts.' Thus faithful miniſters expreſs their fervent deſire and ſincere endeavour to manifeſt to their own conſciences, as in the ſight of God, that 'for them 'to' preach and 'live is Chriſt.'——From hence it naturally follows, as the next thing which our text leads us to conſider, that,

III. While faithful miniſters preach Chriſt, and not themſelves, they are themſelves the ſervants of immortal ſouls. Though by renouncing ſelf in their preaching they ſhew, that they are ſerving Chriſt wholly; yet in reality, they are making themſelves the ſervants of their fellow-creatures in the following inſtances;—they are ſerving their fellow-creatures in their beſt intereſts,—and they are doing it with their own beſt capacities and opportunities.

1. In preaching Chriſt, and not themſelves, faithful miniſters are ſerving the beſt intereſts of immortal ſouls. In all ſuch preaching, they are addreſſing themſelves to the moſt deplorable and neceſſitous circumſtances of the ſouls of men. They are laying open the innumerable wants and the unſpeakable miſeries of precious ſouls, even every ſpiritual diſeaſe, every plague of the heart, all their ignorance of divine things and diſreliſh for them. They labour to convince ſinners that they have been

been 'fooliſh, diſobedient, deceived, ſerving 'divers luſts and pleaſures, living in malice 'and envy, hateful, and hating one another.† They ſhew what inſenſibility there is in the conſcience, what obſtinacy in the will, how liable the impenitent every moment are to eternal wrath on account of innumerable and aggravated ſins and tranſgreſſions; that there are loads of guilt, which, when felt, are intolerable, and a loſs of divine likeneſs and friendſhip which it is not in the power of mortals, either to eſtimate, or repair. The only deſign for which faithful miniſters endeavour thus to diſcover ſoul-miſeries, is in order to promote ſoul-happineſs. They wound, in order that they may moſt effectually heal. They endeavour to point out the deſperate diſeaſe, that the only ſovereign remedy may be ſeriouſly enquired after, and received with a hearty welcome. They occaſion no pains, but what have the moſt ſalutary tendency. Their efforts may ſeem rough, but the benevolent intention is only 'to turn from ſatan to GOD,' from ſin to holineſs, from darkneſs to light, from guilt to forgiveneſs, from earth to heaven, from the depth of trouble and diſtreſs to well-grounded joy and triumph. It is impoſſible for faithful miniſters to ſerve periſhing ſouls ſo effectually, as in promoting their converſion and regeneration, and directing them how

† Titus iii. 2.

how to ſecure the pardon of their ſins their acceptance with God, and to obtain divine ſtrength againſt all the powers of corruption and temptation. Nor is it an inferior ſervice, to teach them how to derive peace and conſolation from divine promiſes, or to aſſiſt them in their growing preparation to meet death, as a conquered enemy, ſo as to 'have an entrance 'miniſtered unto them abundantly into the 'everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Savi-'our Jeſus Chriſt.' Undoubtedly there are numerous inſtances, in which faithful miniſters may, and will, delight to ſerve their fellow-creatures in their temporal intereſts; but ſoul-concerns are of infinitely greater importance, and therefore no ſervice is comparable to this. ——And as they are ſerving the beſt intereſts of ſouls, ſo,

2. Faithful miniſters, in preaching Chriſt, and not themſelves, are ſerving ſouls with their own beſt capacities and opportunities. All their reading, meditation, and prayer, in private, is deſigned to render themſelves 'able 'miniſters of the new teſtament,' that they may ſerve the ſouls of men with their moſt improved powers of heart and mind. All their 'preaching the word, in ſeaſon, and out of 'ſeaſon,' on Lord's-Days, and on other days, in 'publick' aſſemblies, 'and from houſe to 'houſe,' is a conſtant 'ſpending' themſelves, 'and being ſpent' for immortal ſouls. All their

their catechiſing of children, and converſe with the adult; all their 'watching' over the temper and converſation of younger and elder, 'with prayers and tears,' with deep concern of mind, and trembling apprehenſions for the many miſcarriages, and the great unteachableneſs and untractableneſs of ſouls; together with neceſſary reproofs and admonitions, entreaties and perſuaſions; all this is a conſtant and perſevering, anxious and laborious, yet a willing and chearful improvement of their beſt capacities and opportunities for the welfare of the ſouls committed to their care, 'as 'they that muſt give account.'* The apoſtle, in the moſt inſinuating and expreſſive terms, ſpeaks, what faithful miniſters feel, when he tells the ſouls, amongſt whom he had abundantly laboured; 'We were gentle among you, 'even as a nurſe cheriſheth her children; ſo, 'being affectionately deſirous of you, we were 'willing to have imparted unto you, not the 'goſpel of GOD only, but alſo our own ſouls, 'becauſe ye were dear unto us.'†——There is but one thing more for us to conſider, in order to compleat the apoſtle's train of generous and tender ſentiments in our text: viz.

IV. While faithful miniſters are themſelves the ſervants of immortal ſouls, their principal motive for engaging in ſuch ſervice is for JESUS' ſake. They have other motives. They love ſouls,

* Heb. xiii. 17. † 1 Theſſ. ii. 7, 8.

ſouls, and think nothing too much to do for their ſalvation. They love the work itſelf, though ſo difficult and ſelf-denying. But all other motives are ſwallowed up in this one, for Jeſus' ſake; that is,—in an ambitious conformity to his example;—in a chearful obedience to his commandments;—in a grateful ſenſe of their infinite obligations to his love;—and in a joyful dependance upon his promiſes.

1. Faithful miniſters ſerve immortal ſouls, in an ambitious conformity to the example of Jeſus. They deſire and ſtrive to copy after their Lord and maſter; but they ſee themſelves come infinitely ſhort of the all-perfect pattern. With holy aſtoniſhment they contemplate his ſervices for the ſouls of men; how he left the boſom of his Father, became 'a man of ſor-'rows, an intimate companion of grief, mak-'ing himſelf of no reputation, and taking 'upon him the form of a ſervant, being made 'in the likeneſs of man;' how 'he came' from heaven to earth,—to the ſtable,—the manger,—the croſs, 'not to be miniſtered unto, but 'to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for 'many.' Their hearts are melted, while they trace his compaſſion for ſouls, thro' all his cares and labours, his watchings and wreſtlings, his prayers and tears, the reproaches and revilings which fell upon him, his bloody agony and cruel death. They ſee, how Jeſus

loved,

loved, and lived, and died for the very meaneſt and loweſt of mortals, as well as for princes and nobles. His example fires their breaſts with an ardent concern to walk, as Jeſus walked, and love, and ſerve ſouls, as he did, ſo far as their circumſtances will admit. They grieve for their want of conformity to him; it is their joy to diſcern in themſelves any thing of his likeneſs, and it is all their ambition to reſemble him more and more.

2. Faithful miniſters ſerve immortal ſouls, in a chearful obedience to the commandments of Jeſus. They well know his indiſputable right to command them. They delight to 'hear him,' as the 'beloved Son of GOD,' whom GOD himſelf commands them to hear. It is all their deſire, to be able to prove the ſincerity of their love to him; which it is impoſſible for them to do, except they 'keep his 'commandments.' He commanded his apoſtles to 'go into all the world, and preach the 'goſpel to every creature.' By his authority 'miniſters were' alſo 'ordained in every city.' And as if it was Chriſt himſelf that ſpake it, they conſider, what the apoſtle ſays to *Timothy*, as ſaid to themſelves: 'I charge thee before 'GOD, and the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who ſhall 'judge the quick and the dead at his appear-'ing, and his kingdom; preach the word, 'be inſtant, in ſeaſon, out of ſeaſon; reprove, 'rebuke, exhort with all long ſuffering and

'doctrine.' * In all that faithful miniſters do for precious ſouls, they ſtill remember, this is his appointment and command, 'whoſe 'they are, and whom they ſerve,' who is the beſt of maſters, and whom it is their higheſt honour, and their chief delight to obey in all things, and eſpecially in this nobleſt ſervice of ſouls redeemed by his precious blood.

3. Faithful miniſters profeſs themſelves the ſervants of immortal ſouls for Jeſus' ſake, to expreſs their grateful ſenſe of their infinite obligations to the love of Jeſus. They can with propriety ſay, that 'the love of Chriſt, 'conſtrains them to live' and labour, and ſuffer, and preach, 'not for themſelves, but 'for him, who died for them, and roſe again.' This is their principal reaſon for all the labours of their miniſtry, 'whether they' ſeem therein to 'be ſober, or' even to 'be beſides 'themſelves.' †

'What can a feeble worm repay
'For love ſo infinite as thine?
'The torrent bears my ſoul away,
'Th' impetuous ſtream of grace divine.

'To thee, my Lord, it bears me on;
'Self ſhall be deify'd no more;
'By ſelf betray'd, by ſelf undone,
'I live by thy recov'ning pow'r.

'Accept a ſoul ſo dearly bought,
'Bought by thy life upon the tree;
'A ſoul which, by thy ſpirit taught,
'Knows no delight, but ſerving thee.'

4. It

* 2 Tim. iv. 1, 2. † 2 Cor. v. 13—15.

4. It muſt alſo be added, that faithful miniſters are, for Jeſus' ſake, the ſervants of immortal ſouls, becauſe they joyfully depend upon the promiſes of Jeſus. Has Chriſt ſaid, 'where I am, there ſhall alſo my ſervant be? 'When the chief ſhepherd ſhall appear, ſhall' they, 'receive a crown of glory that fadeth 'not away,' who have fed the flock of 'GOD, 'and taken the overſight thereof, not by con-'ſtraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, 'but of a ready mind; not as Lords of GOD's 'heritage, but examples of the flock? Shall 'they, that turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhine 'as the ſtars for ever and ever?' Such 'ex-'ceeding great and precious promiſes,' ſo expreſsly made to faithful miniſters, are animating to their ſpirits, excite them to unwearied ſelf-denying labours for immortal ſouls, and render them impregnable againſt all the enſnaring and defiling influence of worldly hopes and proſpects, and infinitely ſuperiour to all worldly terrours. Let the greateſt of mortals ſmile or frown; let the riches, honours and pleaſures of earth be diſplayed in their moſt enchanting forms, or even all the rage and malice of hell itſelf to confound them; ſtill it is an infinitely more powerful conſideration, to have Jeſus aſſure them, that in the great day of account he himſelf will ſay, 'Well-done, ye good and faithful ſervants, ye 'have been faithful over a few things, I will

'make you rulers over many things, enter ye 'into the joy of your Lord.'

The IMPROVEMENT

of ſuch a ſubject as this may, at leaſt, ſuggeſt to us the following particulars.

1. Let us be thankful for thoſe miniſters, who preach Chriſt faithfully, and let us earneſtly pray for their aſſiſtance and ſucceſs, and that more ſuch may be raiſed up. We cannot ſurvey the character and conduct of faithful miniſters, as delineated by the great apoſtle, without concluding that they are the greateſt bleſſings to mankind. Such were the apoſtles themſelves, and all that breathed their ſpirit, and followed their example, through the ſeveral paſt ages of the church. 'By the grace 'of GOD, they were, what they were. Thro' 'Chriſt ſtrengthening them,' they rejoiced in their being 'able to do all things.' Therefore let GOD and Chriſt be glorified on their account. Whoever in the preſent day are anſwering the character of faithful miniſters of the goſpel, it is becauſe they have drank deep of the ſame ſpirit, and are acting upon the ſame principles. It is not any diſtinguiſhing name, or party, or popular talents, or eminence in learning, that can clothe them with ſuch dignity and excellence, as their preaching not themſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus the Lord.

Let

Let us humbly adore the riches of divine grace, which has made them 'able miniſters 'of the New Teſtament, not of the letter, 'but of the ſpirit.' Let us bleſs GOD for their miniſterial gifts and graces; eſpecially, for their humility, ſelf-denial, and deadneſs to worldly hopes and fears; for their ſpirituality of temper and flaming zeal for Chriſt and ſouls, ſo as to 'ſpend themſelves and be ſpent' in this nobleſt ſervice, and even to 'travail 'in birth again, till they ſee Chriſt formed' in the multitudes around them. Tho' in too many inſtances ſuch miniſters may be treated, as 'beſides themſelves,' as enthuſiaſts, as the 'troublers of *Iſrael*,' and be loaded with names of reproach, like the *Puritans* ſoon after the reformation, or the *Preſbyterians* at the cloſe of the laſt age, or many of thoſe who are called *Methodiſts* now; yet let us honour them as the meſſengers of GOD, and 'the glory of Chriſt.' And let us not only bleſs GOD for ſuch, but fervently pray on their account, 'that GOD would give them a door 'of utterance,' yea, that 'a great door and 'effectual may be opened unto them;' and 'that the word of the Lord may have free 'courſe, and be glorified,' in the conviction and converſion of ſinners, and the holineſs and love of all them that profeſs to believe in the Lord Jeſus. Since it is 'the Lord of 'the harveſt,' whoſe prerogative it is, to 'ſend

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'by whom he will ſend,' let us beſeech him to raiſe up greater numbers of ſuch faithful miniſters, and 'ſend forth ſuch labourers into 'his harveſt.' Let us pray, that he will therefore abundantly bleſs 'the ſchools of the 'prophets,' by 'caſting the ſalt' of his grace 'into the ſprings,' to 'heal the waters, that 'there may not be from thence any more 'death, or barrenneſs;' but that all our univerſities and private academies may hold the waters of life, and ſend forth 'ſtreams' of truth and piety, which 'ſhall make glad the 'city of GOD;' till 'the wilderneſs and the 'ſolitary places,' in our own land, and in every land, 'ſhall be glad for them, and the 'deſert ſhall rejoice, and bloſſom as the roſe.' ——But while we pray and praiſe on account of the faithful miniſters of Chriſt, it is of no little importance to add,

2. Let us take heed how we attend upon the preaching of Chriſt, and what uſe we make of the faithful ſervices of Chriſt's miniſters. Muſt miniſters be jealous over themſelves with a godly jealouſy, concerning the principles and motives of their preaching Chriſt, 'leſt that 'by any means when they have preached to 'others, they themſelves ſhould be caſt away?' And ought it not to be ſeriouſly remembered, that Chriſt himſelf ſays to the hearers of his goſpel, 'Take heed how you hear?' Selfiſh preachers and ſelfiſh hearers are both abomi-

nable

nable in the ſight of God. Let none of you therefore dare to ſit under the ſound of the goſpel, merely to gratify your pride and vanity, your humour and curioſity, or as if it was only a matter of amuſement and empty ſpeculation, or wholly deſigned to cenſure or applaud ſomething in the preacher. On the contrary, come to goſpel ordinances 'for Jeſus' 'ſake.' Come, as periſhing ſinners, that Jeſus may be your Saviour and Lord. Hear, as for your ſouls and eternity. Apply what you hear, that Chriſt may be your life, your all; that you may 'come to him for life, and may have 'it more abundantly.' So hear and apply the word, that you may be enabled to forſake all for Chriſt, how dear ſo ever any thing may ſeem that rivals him, or ſtands in competition with him; that you may give Chriſt your hearts, value him as your unſearchable riches, and be numbered amongſt his ſincere followers, his faithful and obedient ſubjects and ſervants. Fail not to render your humble and hearty thanks to the Lord Jeſus, for the help he affords you, by the inſtrumentality of his faithful miniſters. 'Eſteem ſuch very highly 'in love for their work's ſake.' Remember that every ſermon and prayer, every exhortation and admonition, every entreaty and perſuaſion, addreſſed to you or for you by your faithful miniſters, whether in public or private, is a precious talent, for which the Lord Jeſus will

will another day require a ſtrict account. And forget not that you have this ineſtimable treaſure depoſited 'in earthen veſſels.' O how very frail and feeble, liable every day and hour to fall in pieces! Happy infirmity and inſtability! if it inculcates upon you this great, however humiliating truth, 'that the excellency of 'the power may be of God,' and not of the beſt of miniſters, who are ever ſolicitous to ſay, 'Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto 'thy name' be all the glory, honour and praiſe. — To conclude,

3. How ſhould we pity and pray for thoſe, who either neglect the preaching of Chriſt, or have no opportunity for attending upon it. Did an apoſtle meditate this terrour to himſelf, and to the chriſtians to whom he was writing? Did he awfully ſuggeſt, 'How ſhall 'we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation?' Did he, 'knowing the terrour of the Lord, 'therefore perſuade men' to regard the goſpel of Chriſt, and their perſonal intereſt in the bleſſings of it, as things of infinite importance? Did the Lord Jeſus himſelf 'weep over' negligent ſouls, becauſe they 'knew not,' nor regarded 'the time of their viſitation?' Let us tremble for ſuch. Let us pity their blindneſs. Let our hearts bleed for the miſeries, to which they are expoſing themſelves. Let us wreſtle with God in prayer for them, that their attention to eternal things may be all awake; that they

they may cry out in earneſt, 'Sirs, what muſt we do to be ſaved?' and be effectually brought to 'know' and conſider, 'in this their day, 'the things which belong to their peace.' Then ſabbaths ſhall no longer be prophaned by ſuch multitudes. Then ſhall worſhiping aſſemblies be collected in every neighbourhood, and every where be crowded with ſouls, that 'hunger 'and thirſt' for the bread and water of life. Then ſhall 'there be a ſhaking heard in the 'valley of dry bones, and they ſhall live. Then 'ſhall the churches be edified, and, walking in 'the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of 'the Holy Ghoſt, be multiplied.'

But beſides the multitudes that neglect the preaching of Chriſt, where he is preached, let us employ our tender thoughts on the far greater multitudes, who never heard of the goſpel, or never had the preachers of it ſent amongſt them. 'They ſit in darkneſs, and in 'the region and ſhadow of death.' They demand our pity and prayers. Let us plead on their behalf, that the Lord of the whole earth, the common Father of angels and men, the 'God who in Chriſt is reconciling the world 'unto himſelf, will' graciouſly 'bring the 'blind by a way, that they know not, and lead 'them in paths' of holineſs and conſolation, 'which they have not known.' Let us fervently pray, that Chriſt Jeſus the Lord may be 'manifeſted' unto them, and 'the works

'of the devil be deſtroyed' in them; that 'their eyes may be opened, and they turned 'from darkneſs to light, and from the power 'of Satan unto God, that they 'alſo' may re-'ceive forgiveneſs of ſins, and inheritance 'among them which are ſanctified by faith 'that is in the Lord Jeſus.' In connection with ſuch prayers, and as a genuine evidence of their ſincerity, let our hearts and hands be open to encourage to the utmoſt every ſerious effort towards making Chriſt and his goſpel known to the heathen world. Thus, inſtead of minding only our ſelfiſh and carnal intereſts, let the intereſt of Chriſt direct and animate our cares and prayers, as thoſe that ſupremely 'ſeek, not our own things, but the things 'which are Jeſus Chriſt's.' That this may be the temper and character, both of miniſters and hearers, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jeſus Chriſt our Lord. *Amen.*

THE END.

BRITISH MUSEUM 23 JY 79

THE CONFESSION of FAITH

DELIVERED

By the Reverend Mr. JANES,

WITH

The QUESTIONS propoſed to Mr. JANES,

And his ANSWERS,

AT HIS

ORDINATION

IN

Tuckers-Street Meeting, BRISTOL,

MAY 26th, 1774.

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In requeſting Mr. Janes *to deliver his confeſſion of faith, one of his brethren ſaid:*

I Beg leave to obſerve, for the ſatisfaction of every perſon in this numerous congregation, that it is uſual for proteſtant diſſenting miniſters, at their ordination, to deliver a confeſſion of faith, containing their apprehenſions of divine truth, expreſſed in their own words. Such a manner of confeſſing their faith perfectly conſiſts with the right of private judgment, ſufficiently intimates their readineſs to give a reaſon of the hope that is in them, and not a little contributes to their acceptance and ſucceſs amongſt thoſe that ſit under their miniſtry.

Let me therefore entreat you, Sir, to favour us with your preſent views of that glorious goſpel, which you intend to make the grand ſubject of your future miniſtrations.

CONFESSION.

SIR,

I *BELIEVE* that principle which gives life and motion to my body is immortal; that it derived its exiſtence from that eternal, incomprehenſible, and only independent Being, who is called GOD; the works of whoſe hands, and the words of whoſe grace, declare his

his wiſdom to be infinite, his preſence univerſal, his power irreſiſtible, his purity unſullied, his truth invariable, his juſtice inflexible, and his goodneſs unbounded.

I *believe* this great and good GOD is the father of all ſpirits, the maker of all things, the governour and ſuſtainer of all worlds. — I *believe* all his works were impreſſed with the faireſt characters of perfection when they came from his forming hands — that he made man a moral image of himſelf, and endowed him with every mean neceſſary to preſerve and encreaſe his primeval happineſs. But, I am well aſſured by the holy ſcriptures, the melancholy hiſtory of the unbecoming and impious conduct of mankind, and moreover, by my own ſad experience, that man no longer bears that glorious ſemblance to the Deity — that he is a fallen creature, has loſt his original rectitude and dignity — that his mental powers are vaſtly impaired and diſordered, eſpecially as they relate to GOD, and the things which make for his preſent and eternal peace — that his moral and rational powers are greatly in ſubjection to *animal* and ſenſual appetites; that in conſequence of this he is equally impotent, ignorant, and averſe to return to his duty and his GOD; and unleſs prevented by the free grace of the Almighty, he would urge his purſuit after imaginary happineſs, till his ungoverned paſſions hurry him into irrecoverable

ruin.

ruin. I *believe* all theſe evils, together with grief, pain, ſickneſs, death, and thoſe innumerable ills which await us at our entrance into life, and attend us till our departure out of it, were brought upon us by one act of Adam's diſobedience to the divine law. I therefore conſider ſin as the damnable cauſe of all moral, temporal, and eternal evil, from which I *believe* we have neither wiſdom nor power to deliver ourſelves.

Upon this I ground the neceſſity of a revelation from God, to inſtruct us in the means of our recovery from ſo profound a ſtate of wretchedneſs. But inaſmuch as the will, in its preſent depraved condition, refuſes ſubjection to the underſtanding, I *believe* the operations of the Holy Spirit in the human heart are indiſpenſably neceſſary to reſtore us to obedience and holineſs in this life, in order to our glorification in the life to come.

I *believe* the bible is a divine revelation from God to man; that it was compoſed from time to time by holy men of old, as they were inſpired by the Holy Ghoſt; — that it contains every thing neceſſary to be believed and practiſed by us for our preſent and eternal happineſs. And here, Sir, give me leave, in a matter of ſo great importance, to offer a few of the many arguments which might be given for my embracing the bible as a divine revelation. First, from its *harmony*; That tho' compoſed

compoſed in different and very diſtant ages, by men of various capacities, and under different diſpenſations; yet the bible is as free from incongruity, as the ſun is from darkneſs. SECONDLY, Becauſe it accounts for the univerſal depravity of mankind, not only with the face of truth, but the force of conviction, to the confuſion of human pride, and the overthrow of every contradictory aſſertion. THIRDLY, Becauſe it propoſes a remedy exactly ſuitable to our complaints, and every way worthy the wiſdom, the greatneſs, the juſtice and the goodneſs of GOD. FOURTHLY, Becauſe its doctrines have wrought ſuch wonders in all ages, in men of all complections, various manners, oppoſite tempers, and contrary opinions, who, under the influence of its ſacred and convincing truths, cordially unite in faith and practice. An effect this, never brought about by the philoſophy of men, nor eſtabliſhed by their policy or power. FIFTHLY, From the accompliſhments of its predictions; which is rendered inconteſtable by the very enemies of GOD, who acknowledge themſelves to have been witneſſes to the facts. —— But I have one more reaſon to offer, and which with me outweighs every other, viz. I humbly truſt, I experience in my own heart ſome of the many bleſſings, which the bible promiſes to mankind; therefore I embrace it with all my heart, and with all my ſoul, as a revelation from Almighty GOD.

I *believe* in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Meſſiah promiſed to and expected by the patriarchs and prophets of old. I diſcern, in the ſtupendous plan of redemption, matter of everlaſting aſtoniſhment, adoration and praiſe. When I reflect upon the incarnation of the word, who was with GOD, and who was GOD, by whom all things were made; — when I conſider the glory which he laid aſide, and the inconveniencies and indignities to which he expoſed himſelf by taking on him the form of a ſervant; — when I review his unwearied labours, and follow him thro' the laſt ſtages of his life; — when I hear him groaning in the garden, and behold angelic ſpirits miniſtring to him in his bloody paſſion; — when I ſee him arreſted by a traitor, arraigned before *Caiaphas* and *Pilate*; inſulted, ſcourged, and buffeted by the rabble; and at laſt nailed to the croſs as a malefactor; and hear him expreſſing the pungent ſorrows of his ſoul, and view him expiring in mortal agonies, I am loſt in this inexplicable myſtery, 'GOD manifeſt in the fleſh;' — 'God in Chriſt reconciling the world unto 'himſelf,' thro' the divine agency of the ſacred Spirit; for I believe 'there are three 'that bear record in heaven, the Father, the 'Word, and the Holy Ghoſt, and theſe three 'are one.'

I *believe* the ſalvation of my ſoul wholly depends upon the merits of what our moſt bleſſed Saviour *did* in his life, *ſuffered* in his death, and is *now doing* in heaven for us; and tho' I am fully aſſured much muſt be done *in* me and *by* me, yet, foraſmuch as it is HE 'who enables me to will and to do, without 'whom I can do nothing,' I joyfully acknowledge my obligations to the adorable Jeſus for my deliverance from the guilt and dominion of ſin in this life, and my every hope of glory in the world to come.

I *believe* that pardon of ſin, holineſs, and eternal ſalvation are offered in the goſpel to all men, upon their repentance toward GOD, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; and that no one will be excluded from theſe ineſtimable bleſſings, but ſuch, as reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt, and ſpurn the offers of condeſcending mercy.

I *believe* repentance and faith are the gift of GOD thro' Chriſt; and that good works are the neceſſary fruits and rational evidences of true faith in Jeſus Chriſt.

I *believe* GOD has appointed certain means for the attainment of eternal life, called means of grace; which are prayer, hearing and reading the word of GOD, and the ſacraments of baptiſm and the Lord's ſupper. — I *believe* theſe means are made effectual to the end, when we engage in them with a true heart, prompted by the Holy Ghoſt, without whoſe aid all our duties are nothing worth.

FINALLY,

FINALLY, I *believe* there is a day, a great and awful day, ſwiftly advancing, in which GOD will judge the world by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; — that he will then diſplay his amazing power by raiſing our bodies from the ruins of death and the grave in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when the trumpet ſhall ſound; — that then the awards of the righteous Judge ſhall be put into immediate execution, that the righteous ſhall go into life everlaſting, and the wicked into everlaſting puniſhment.

Under a deep impreſſion of theſe moſt awful and important truths, I paſſionately requeſt your prayers, Dear Sir, and thoſe of my reverend Fathers, and of all chriſtian people, that I may be ſo divinely aſſiſted in the arduous work of the miniſtry, that I may be the unſpeakably happy inſtrument in the hands of GOD, to call ſinners to repentance and the knowledge of ſalvation; of reclaiming backſliders, of comforting the contrite, and of building up and edifying the church of Chriſt in faith and holineſs, that not one of theſe precious and immortal ſouls may be wanting, when Chriſt ſhall come to gather his elect. — And I alſo ardently deſire that you will earneſtly ſupplicate the Almighty, that I may ſo conduct myſelf in every relation of life as finally to obtain mercy, thro' our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

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FINALLY,

FINALLY, I *believe* there is a day, a great and awful day, ſwiftly advancing, in which GOD will judge the world by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt; — that he will then diſplay his amazing power by raiſing our bodies from the ruins of death and the grave in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, when the trumpet ſhall ſound; — that then the awards of the righteous Judge ſhall be put into immediate execution, that the righteous ſhall go into life everlaſting, and the wicked into everlaſting puniſhment.

Under a deep impreſſion of theſe moſt awful and important truths, I paſſionately requeſt your prayers, Dear Sir, and thoſe of my reverend Fathers, and of all chriſtian people, that I may be ſo divinely aſſiſted in the arduous work of the miniſtry, that I may be the unſpeakably happy inſtrument in the hands of GOD, to call ſinners to repentance and the knowledge of ſalvation; of reclaiming backſliders, of comforting the contrite, and of building up and edifying the church of Chriſt in faith and holineſs, that not one of theſe precious and immortal ſouls may be wanting, when Chriſt ſhall come to gather his elect. — And I alſo ardently deſire that you will earneſtly ſupplicate the Almighty, that I may ſo conduct myſelf in every relation of life as finally to obtain mercy, thro' our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt.

After Mr. Janes *had delivered his confeſſion of faith, one of his brethren proceeded to aſk the following queſtions, to which Mr.* Janes *returned diſtinct anſwers.*

IN order to the ordination of a proteſtant diſſenting miniſter, beſides making a publick confeſſion of his faith, he is alſo expected to bind himſelf to his miniſterial duties by the moſt ſolemn vows, expreſſed in the moſt publick manner, and with the greateſt freedom and ſincerity. There is, indeed, an unſpeakable ſolemnity in ſuch ordination-vows, conſidering the Lord and Maſter we ſerve, the ſtrict account we are to give, the infinite value of immortal ſouls, and the ſin and danger of neglecting ſouls:

I cannot, therefore, propoſe to you, Sir, the following queſtions, without wiſhing to feel the ſame godly jealouſy over myſelf in aſking them, with which I am verily perſuaded you will anſwer them, as in the preſence of God, and not merely of this crouded audience.

Q. *What are your ends in undertaking the chriſtian miniſtry?*

A. I am ſenſible God regards the motives, which excite us in all our undertakings; therefore

fore the miniſtry, above all other, ought not raſhly to be engaged in. God is my witneſs, that no proſpect or deſire of filthy lucre induced me to engage in this holy buſineſs. I undertook it, as the moſt eligible way, to ſave my own ſoul, and to promote the real happineſs of mankind.

Q. *What do you propoſe as to diligence and induſtry in your miniſterial work?*

A. My deſigns are, as they here ſeem, to uſe the means appointed for acquiring grace and knowledge, that I may be more able and willing to diſcharge the duties of a miniſter of Chriſt in public and private.

Q. *What are your thoughts of the reformation from popery?*

A. I eſteem the reformation from popery, as a glorious deliverance from ignorance, idolatry, prieſtcraft, and ſuperſtition; in a word, as one of the greateſt bleſſings enjoyed by the chriſtian church.

Q. *Why do you chuſe to enter upon your miniſtry amongſt the proteſtants that diſſent from the church of England?*

A. I engage myſelf as a paſtor amongſt proteſtant diſſenters, in obedience to the leadings of

of providence, and with the hearty concurrence of my conſcience and inclination, rejoicing in my preſent ſphere, on account of the peculiar advantages, reſpecting my religious liberty, as a chriſtian, and a miniſter.

Q. *Will you endeavour to live in peace among your brethren in the miniſtry, unite with them in promoting the intereſt of Chriſt and ſouls, and ſubmit yourſelf to brotherly reproof?*

A. I deſire to live in peace with all men, but eſpecially with thoſe who labour in the word and doctrine of my bleſſed Maſter. I deſire to unite with them in pulling down the ſtrongholds of Satan, and building up the church of Chriſt; and I ſhall gladly receive their friendly admonitions and reproofs.

Q. *What are your views and reſolutions with reſpect to a religious care of your own family?*

A. I conceive family religion to be of the utmoſt importance, whether I conſider it as conducive to the peace and good government of a family, or as a means of preparing its ſeveral branches for an union with the great family of God in heaven. I have therefore reſolved, in this reſpect, with *Joſhua*, not merely becauſe it is my duty, but alſo my priviledge and happineſs, to ſerve the Lord, that

is,

is, to inſtruct my family in the ways of GOD, to pray for them, and to appear with them at the throne of grace.

Q. *Once more, what are your purpoſes as to perſeverance in your miniſtry, in caſe of perſecution, or other diſcouragements?*

A. I am too ſenſible of our proneneſs to depart from GOD at all times, not to fear, leſt I ſhould follow the example of *Peter*, in the proſpect of thoſe things which are ſhocking to our nature. Yet I earneſtly hope to live and die in the public ſervice of my Lord and Saviour; and am reſolved, he being my helper, to follow, own, and proclaim him through evil and good report.

Now, Sir, it is moſt ſeaſonable and important, that ſuch ordination-vows ſhould be immediately followed with an ordination-prayer. And while we pray, I doubt not, Sir, but your own heart, and the hearts of your brethren in the miniſtry, will be much engaged. It is alſo our earneſt deſire, that every heart in this aſſembly will devoutly and affectionately join with us.

The

The miniſters who concurred in the impoſition of hands on Mr. Janes, were

Benjamin Fawcett, of *Kidderminſter.*

Andrew Kinſman, of *Plymouth.*

~~William~~ Bowden, of *Fareham, Hants.*

Peter Sampſon, of *Truro.*

Sayer Walker, of *Caſtle-Green, Briſtol.*

John Peacock, of *Broadway*, near *Taunton.*

BRITISH MUSEUM 23 JY 79

A CHARGE

A

CHARGE

DELIVERED AT THE

ORDINATION

OF THE

Reverend Mr. THOMAS JANES,

AT

Tuckers-Street Meeting, BRISTOL,

MAY 26th, 1774.

By ANDREW KINSMAN.

A

CHARGE, &c.

I AM ſo ſenſible of my weakneſs, and inability to diſcharge properly that important part of the ſolemn work of this day, which is aſſigned me, that before I ſpeak to you, my brother, I muſt be permitted to addreſs my GOD, and implore his aid.

" O Thou eternal and univerſal Parent, " Father of all ſpirits, Thou GOD of nature " and of grace; did thy ſervant *Iſaiah* need " to have his lips touched with a coal from " thy heavenly altar, e'er he entered upon his " important office? then ſend down a globe " of celeſtial fire this day, to purge the droſs, " to purify the heart of thy unworthy crea- " ture, that he may diſcharge his important " commiſſion, not only as in the preſence of " the great Head of the church and Biſhop " of ſouls, but with all that gravity, faith- " fulneſs, affection, and godly fear, as ſhall " be approved of another day, when ſowers " and reapers, paſtors and people ſhall all " ſtand to hear their ſolemn charge and irre- " verſible ſentence from thy righteous bar."

Certain I am, this province would appear to my elder brethren and fathers, impro-

per to be aſſigned to me on many accounts; was it not for that relation I ſtand in to our dear brother, who hath now conſecrated his life and labours to the ſervice of the ſanctuary. But the ties of nature, together with the diſpoſal of divine providence, made this my province in your tender years. When father and mother were taken from you, you became my care; I was called to act the part of a guardian and a father. And though what I have to advance, cannot be expected to carry that weight to ſome others in your ſtation; yet, I am perſuaded, it will command that regard from you, which a dutiful child would pay to the ſolemn charge and affectionate advice of a parent.

With this conſideration, I thought to addreſs you from the well-known words of aged *David* to his ſon *Solomon*. Having declared to all the princes and elders of the people, who it was the Lord had choſen, and what was the divine pleaſure therein, he encouraged his ſon to build the houſe of the Lord. You are called, and have taken upon you the character and work of a builder of a ſpiritual houſe. The Lord grant you ſuch ſucceſs, that many living ſtones may, through your miniſtry, be cemented together, and all be built upon the rock of ages, Jeſus Chriſt the chief corner ſtone! As the coſtly materials, the peculiar pattern,

pattern, or ſuperb plan, were provided to *Solomon*'s hands, therefore *David* ſaid,

1 CHRONICLES, XXVIII. 20.

Be ſtrong and of good courage, and do it; fear not, nor be diſmayed, for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee, he will not fail thee, nor forſake thee, until thou haſt finiſhed all the work for the ſervice of the houſe of the Lord.

I think, with ſome degree of propriety, I might apply this charge and promiſe to a goſpel miniſter. But leſt I might be mis-judged, from ſome peculiarities in the people and the diſpenſation under which it was ſpoken, I was willing to look farther. And hark! I hear *Paul* echo ſimilar language under the goſpel, when addreſſing young *Timothy*, one of the firſt chriſtian biſhops or elders. Perhaps this may be looked upon by many as more pertinant to the preſent occaſion. I ſhall therefore lead your thoughts, my dear brother, with me to the apoſtle's words, in which he ſpeaks as a father to a ſon, addreſſing him, like a general, juſt about to die and leave the field of battle, to an inferiour officer, who was to ſucceed him. But, I ſuppoſe, you will not imagine that I preſume, in this place, to ſpeak in this apoſtolic language to you, as your ſuperiour, but only as a ſenior, equal in office, as your fellow-ſervant employed in the ſame work,

expoſed

expoſed to the ſame evils, and ſubject to like infirmities. As ſuch I exhort you,

2 TIMOTHY, ii. 1.

Thou therefore, my ſon, be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.

I believe, it is generally allowed, by the ſcope of this and the foregoing epiſtle, that they are deſigned, not only to be a directory for *Timothy*, and for all ſucceeding miniſters, with reſpect to their office; but alſo as advice, with reſpect to their perſonal behaviour and carriage, before the world, and in the church of GOD. And I will venture to affirm of all thoſe miniſters, who walk according to the rules here given, that 'peace ſhall be upon them, 'and upon the Iſrael of GOD.' The apoſtle having in the preceding chapter expreſſed his love and affection towards *Timothy*, and knowing the temptations he was liable to, on account of *Paul*'s ſufferings, beſides the diſcouragements ariſing from the apoſtacy of ſome, who had made a profeſſion of the truth, and having commended *Oneſimus* for his fidelity and conſtancy, proceeds to encourage and animate his beloved pupil in the words referred to, — *Be ſtrong*, &c.

The utility, yea neceſſity of this advice, or charge, will appear, if we conſider the following particulars, with reſpect to the office you have

have this day taken upon you, (I truſt, by the will of GOD, as well as by the unanimous call of the church here aſſembled)—that it is an office—highly honourable,—attended with many difficulties,—and needs ſtrength from above.

FIRST, The office of a paſtor is high and honourable. Its duties and difficulties made even a *Paul* cry, 'who is ſufficient for theſe 'things?' But as it is natural for man to love power, and to thirſt after honour, many are fond of the miniſterial character, and inconſiderately enter upon the ſacred office. It is honour indeed, to be called, 'ambaſſadors of GOD,' and 'rulers' in the church. But the ſame perſons are alſo ſtiled 'labourers, watch-'men, ſoldiers, and ſhepherds,' wherein great care and diligence, aſſiduity and fidelity are required. Know, then, though your office is high and honourable, it is a work of vaſt importance. The honour of GOD, the converſion of ſinners, the edification of the church, 'which is the body of Chriſt,' yea the happineſs and ſalvation of immortal ſouls, are concerned therein. This is implied, when the apoſtle ſays to *Timothy*, 'Take heed to thyſelf, 'and to thy doctrine, continue in them, for 'in doing this, thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf, 'and them that hear thee.' Surely nothing can be urged of greater importance. But, to miſlead by errour; to corrupt by a vicious life

and

and bad example; to neglect by careleſſneſs, indolence and ſloth, the important truſt, will be found another day to bring upon every unregenerate and carnal miniſter an unanſwerable charge, when, to uſe the words of Mr. *Flavel*, 'the blood of ſouls ſhall be required at their 'hands.' Thus much is intimated in that awful paſſage, (*Ezek.* xxxiii. 6—8.) which I almoſt tremble to repeat, 'If the watchman 'ſee the ſword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the 'ſword come and take any perſon from among 'them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but 'his blood will I require at the watchman's 'hand. So thou, O Son of man, I have ſet 'thee a watchman unto the houſe of *Iſrael*; 'therefore thou ſhalt hear the word of my 'mouth, and warn them from me. When I 'ſay unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou 'ſhalt ſurely die; if thou doſt not ſpeak to 'warn the wicked from his way, that wicked 'man ſhall die in his iniquity; but his blood 'will I require at thy hand.'—O then, 'my 'Son, be ſtrong.'

Secondly, As your office is important, on account of its high and honourable nature, ſo your work is great and arduous. You muſt expect that your trials and difficulties will neither be few nor ſmall. You are 'not ignorant of Satan's devices, who goes about like 'a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour;' and,

and, I may ſay, conſtantly ſtrives to 'ſmite 'the ſhepherds, that the flock may be ſcat-'tered.' We are all called as chriſtians, eſpecially as miniſters, to 'wreſtle not with fleſh and blood only, but againſt principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of the darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs in high places.' Being ſet as a watchman upon the wall, the archers will certainly ſhoot at you. I might, on this head, enumerate ſome of the many trials and temptations, with which Satan uſually labours to diſmay, diſconcert, and diſtreſs the moſt faithful ſervants of Chriſt. And undoubtedly miniſters are often ſo exerciſed, for the ſake of others, that they may be able from their own experience, to 'ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to the weary,' ſuccour the tempted of Chriſt's flock, 'and comfort 'many with the comforts wherewith they 'themſelves are comforted of GOD.' "Prayer, "temptation, and meditation, ſaid *Luther*, "make a divine." They fit a miniſter to act the part of a good ſoldier, to endure hardneſs and weather the ſharpeſt or longeſt blaſts of perſecution, or other afflictions. O what need is there to 'be ſtrong' for your work! As you are called to miniſter in 'holy things,' and to treat with your fellow creatures chiefly about their ſpiritual concerns, your perſonal holineſs is abſolutely neceſſary, without which you will never love your work; nor delight in the con-

ſtant daily duties of your calling. How hard is the taſk, to engage in holy, ſpiritual and heavenly work, with a carnal, ſenſual and worldly mind! I may ſay, the brighteſt parts, attended with all the valuable acquirements of the ſchools, will only leave you, as ſounding braſs, or a tinkling cymbal, in the ſanctified judgement of God's people. Alas! you will ſoon grow weary of your work: and as the apoſtle teſtifies, that 'without holineſs no man ſhall 'ſee the Lord;' ſo may I ſay, without holineſs no man can acceptably and ſucceſsfully ſerve him in his ſanctuary. But the difficulties of your work will not altogether ariſe from Satan's temptations, or from the weakneſs of your own heart. You will meet with various oppoſition from an uncharitable world; and ever find many difficulties ariſing from your own flock, through the imperfections of miniſter and people. Sometimes you will have trials from miſinformed, weak and peeviſh brethren, and frequently from the ſubtilty and artifice of others, who, ſtirred up by envy, will endeavour to ſow tares, and make rents and diviſions in the pureſt church. Now ſince miniſters, with all the work they have to do, and with ſuch a variety of intermixed trials, are at beſt only men of like paſſions with others, ſurely it muſt follow, that,

THIRDLY, They need ſpiritual and divine ſtrength. It is a great thing to be humble in the

the midſt of popularity; to be compoſed and ſelf-poſſeſſing, when neglected and ſlighted; to be meek and patient, when contradicted and oppoſed; and ſtill to 'preſs on towards the 'mark for the prize of the high calling of 'God in Chriſt Jeſus; ſtill to fight the good 'fight of faith, till you finiſh all the work 'for the ſervice of the houſe of the Lord.' Surely, if a valiant *Joſhua* was encouraged by the Lord Jehovah with a, 'be ſtrong, only 'be ſtrong;' if a *Solomon* needed the ſame exhortation from his royal Father; and if a pious *Timothy* was thus adviſed and charged by the great apoſtle, 'be ſtrong;' may I not now repeat the ſame, and ſay, O my brother! O my ſon! In order that you may fulfil the ſolemn engagements you have this day entered into, with a particular church of Chriſt; in order that you may perform the important and difficult duties of your ſtation, as a chriſtian miniſter; in order to your ſupport and comfort under the many trials and temptations you muſt expect, from the world, from Satan, from friends and enemies, from your flock, and from your own houſe and heart; I exhort you to 'be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt 'Jeſus.'

Much of the beauty and energy of this addreſs of the apoſtle, lies in the direction ſo explicitely given, where the aid neceſſary, and the ſtrength adequate to the work, is to be

found; even, 'the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.' In him is everlaſting ſtrength. In him there is an inexhauſtible fulneſs of grace, 'to help 'in every time of need.' Without this fountain to go to, without theſe 'unſearchable 'riches' for your conſtant ſupply, you will find, that with all the natural parts, or acquired abilities, you may poſſeſs, your heart in the Lord's work will ſoon become like the parched heath in ſummer, and your mind like a barren and exhauſted ſoil. Therefore, 'be 'ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.'

Though in times paſt you may have experienced the divine preſence in your maſter's public work; or the power of his love and grace in ſubduing ſecret ſin, and conquering inbred corruption, or rendering you ſuperior to outward difficulties; yet beware of truſting to any gifts or grace already received; but by a freſh and fervent application to the throne of grace, ſeek for new aſſiſtance, that you may in every future circumſtance of trial continue to 'be ſtrong,' and be made ſtill ſtronger and ſtronger 'in the grace that is in Chriſt 'Jeſus.' Thus the ſame apoſtle exhorts all the chriſtians at *Epheſus*, to 'be ſtrong in the 'Lord, and in the power of his might;' and fervently prays for them 'that they may be 'ſtrengthened with might by the ſpirit in the 'inner man, and that Chriſt may dwell in 'their hearts by faith.' Thus, by looking to Jeſus,

Jeſus, you will with renewed vigour run your heavenly race, and poſſeſs that ſtrength, which humanity under its preſent weakneſs cannot produce. For it is by virtue of our union with Chriſt, 'as the branch with the vine,' that ſtrength is communicated, and 'we re-'ceive out of his fulneſs grace for grace,' or grace upon grace. Chriſt, as the head of influence, is an overflowing, yea, an everflowing fountain towards his people. Learn then, my dear brother, in every difficulty and trial, where to look. With your eye up to him, and with your heart depending upon and truſting in him, enter upon all the work and duties of your high calling. Go by faith and prayer to him, in whom all fulneſs ever dwells. He will be wiſdom to guide and direct you, ſtrength to ſupport you, and your ſhield for ſure defence. He will be your unchangeable and all-ſufficient friend, and your everlaſting and exceeding great reward. 'His yoke' will always 'be eaſy' to your ſhoulders, 'and his 'burthen light.' *Paul*'s eye was ſtedfaſtly fixed upon the plenitude of grace, which is in Chriſt, and therefore, ſenſible as he was of his own weakneſs and inſufficiency, yet he ſpeaks even in the language of omnipotence, 'I can 'do all things through Chriſt which ſtrength-'ens me.' On the ſame glorious principles, 'my ſon,' may you alſo 'be ſtrong in the 'grace that is in Chriſt Jeſus.'

Here

Here I beg leave to add a word of caution, as peculiarly ſeaſonable in your circumſtances, and perfectly ſuitable to the nature of my ſubject. Altho' it is neceſſary for every one, who entereth upon this warfare, 'to put on the 'whole armour of GOD;' and though nothing ſhort of omnipotence can make us conquerors; yet you will, I am perſuaded, agree with me, that many difficulties may be obviated, and your trials of ſome kinds in a degree leſſened, by that circumſpection and chriſtian prudence in your conduct, which aged *Paul* recommends in this chapter. As a biſhop and elder in the church, he adviſes young *Timothy*, to 'avoid 'profane and vain bablings, and fooliſh and 'unlearned queſtions, knowing that they do 'gender ſtrifes, but in meekneſs to inſtruct 'thoſe that oppoſe themſelves.' Thus, if Chriſt be the object of your love, faith and truſt, from whom you receive all needful ſupplies of grace, ſtrength and righteouſneſs, need I exhort you then to make him the grand ſubject of your preaching? Or rather, have I not here been happily anticipated by my *reverend father*, who hath largely and judiciouſly treated this ſubject, even the duty of a goſpel miniſter to 'preach not himſelf, but Chriſt Jeſus 'the Lord?' But let me add, that to effect this, controverſy, I apprehend, ſhould be avoided as much as poſſible in public diſcourſes. It hath done the world and churches in general

general but little good; I might ſay, it hath been the unhappy means of much evil. The plain preaching of Chriſt crucified, the glories of the Redeemer's perſon, the greatneſs of his love, the exceeding riches of his grace, were the delightful topics of *Paul*'s preaching and writing. Indeed, man's fall and miſery by ſin, and his recovery by Jeſus Chriſt, to a life of holineſs here, and of happineſs hereafter, are the two leading points of the ſcripture-doctrine. It is a truth, we muſt allow, that there is not a fundamental article of chriſtian faith, but what hath been controverted, and is now exploded by ſome as irrational, and treated as fabulous. We may hear and read of ſome, in what they call this enlightened age, 'who de-'ny the Lord that bought them,' and banter the divinity of our Saviour, though *Paul* repreſents him as 'GOD bleſſed for ever.' At times, therefore, we may be called to 'contend 'for the faith once delivered to the ſaints.' I would not be meant, by avoiding controverſy, that we muſt tamely give up GOD's truth, or turn our backs on, and be neuters in, his righteous cauſe, and thereby give countenance to blaſphemers. No, 'ſpeak thou the things 'which become ſound doctrine.' "The beſt "way to deſtroy error, as Mr. *Buel* of *Rhode* "*Iſland* obſerves, is to preach the truth." But let that be done in the ſpirit of the goſpel, and with the temper of its divine author. And

while

while you differ from others in ſentiments of leſſer moment, endeavour to maintain 'the 'bonds of peace.' How even this is to be done, *Timothy* is directed in this chapter; and that is, by being 'gentle unto all men, apt to 'teach, patient and meek.' Here 'we know 'but in part, and ſee through a glaſs darkly.' But I believe, it will always be found, that the light, evidence and power of the Spirit of God accompanying his truth, will prove more energetic and conquering, than all the ſophiſtry, ſubtle arguments, and 'wrath of man, 'which worketh not the righteouſneſs of 'God.' It appears to me, that the grand parts of a goſpel miniſter's public preaching are dictated to us by our Saviour, when he deſcribes the work of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of the unregenerate world, by ſaying, 'He will reprove, or convince, the world of 'ſin, and of righteouſneſs, and of judgment.' (John xvi. 8.) As far as this is effected, Satan's empire falls, new trophies are brought to the all-glorious Redeemer, and you will 'make full proof of your miniſtry.' Converted ſinners, travelling on in the paths of holineſs, will *be your epiſtle*, to be 'known and 'read of all men,' who have ſpiritual eyes to ſee, and 'will be your joy and crown of 'rejoicing in the preſence of our Lord Jeſus 'Chriſt, at his coming.'

And

And now what ſhall I add? Little did I think, a few weeks ago, that this would have been my work, to ſpeak to you in the name of the Lord. The remaining weakneſs, occaſioned by ſeveral months illneſs, I now feel. And to outward appearance, I am exhorting one, whoſe conſtitution is far from indicating length of days in this world. I would therefore finiſh what I have to deliver, as a dying man, ſpeaking to one, who is juſt going with me to ſtand before the great Head of the church, and 'Judge of all.' *

Now, although all our help is from above, and our ſtrength is in the grace of Jeſus Chriſt, and our ſucceſs in his work, and uſefulneſs in his church, depend upon the divine influence of his Spirit, yet he hath encouraged us to diligence and perſeverance, by

 many.

* 'Till a little before the day of this ordination, Mr. *Kinſman* was confined to his houſe at *Plymouth Dock* for ſeveral months, by ſuch appearances of his uſual *Aſthma*, as alarmed all his friends, and led him to receive 'the 'ſentence of death in himſelf.' As for his nephew, Mr. *Janes*, it is too evident, that his conſtitution has been greatly ſhook, and his health ſo much impaired, by long journies, in connection with abundant miniſterial labours; that he ſeems by his infirmities to be grown old at ſo early a period as *twenty-ſeven*. May it pleaſe God to 'renew his youth like the eagle's,' and give him to ſee, that the many hundred hearers, which have ſo lately begun to crowd his place of worſhip, are really edified in chriſtian graces and virtues!

many great and precious promiſes. 'They 'that turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine 'as the ſtars in the kingdom of heaven.' I would charge myſelf, while I charge you, that having 'put your hand to the plough, you look 'not back,' nor ſhrink from any diſcouragement. 'Bleſſed is the man that endureth 'temptation.' Your maſter is ever looking on, and will come quickly, to honour and reward every faithful ſervant. Then, before an aſſembled world of angels and men, to ſee the dear people of your charge, ariſe and ſtand forth, as witneſſes of your zeal, love and faithfulneſs to God, to his cauſe, and for their ſouls, as 'your joy and crown,' how great muſt be your happineſs! how high and diſtinguiſhed your honour! Let the diſtant proſpect animate all our ſouls, who are thus employed; perſuaded that the 'light afflictions' we may feel, 'are not worthy to be compared 'with an eternal weight of glory.' Therefore 'be ſtrong in the grace that is in Chriſt 'Jeſus.' He will 'never fail' any that truſt in him, nor ſuffer them to be confounded. Let us be looking forward to that great day, when all the faithful 'friends of the bride-'groom ſhall lift up their heads, and ſtand 'with boldneſs before the ſon of man.' Then, when a ſtrict enquiry and thorough ſearch ſhall be made into the motives, the end, the work, the labours of all, who bare the name

of

of his miniſters and ſervants upon earth, and when all muſt give an account of their ſtewardſhip, may you, 'being found faithful unto 'death, receive a crown of life,' with the public approbation of the judge, and the ſurrounding acclamations of men and angels!

I remember the venerable Mr. *Shepherd* of *Braintree*, in his *Aſſociation-ſermon*, preached in the year 1715, hath a quotation from a miniſter of the laſt century, which years ago was ſtriking to me. "By an elegant proſo-"popeia he repreſents the judgment day; "brings in Chriſt the judge placed on his "throne, and calling his miniſters to an ac-"count, how they had preached, and acted "for him in their day.

"Chriſt calls one miniſter, and puts the "queſtion to him, What did you preach for? "The anſwer is, 'I preached, Lord, to keep "a good living of three hundred a year, which "was left me by my father, and which, if I "had not entered into holy orders, had been "altogether loſt as to me.' To him Chriſt "anſwers, 'Stand by, thou haſt thy reward.'

"The queſtion is put to another, and what "did you preach for? He anſwers, 'Lord, "I was applauded as a very learned man, and "I preached to keep up the character of an "eloquent orator, as well as a learned preach-"er.' Chriſt anſwers him alſo, 'Stand by, "thou haſt thy reward.'

" The Lord queſtions another, What did " you preach for? ' Lord, ſays he, I never " aimed at the great things of this world; I " was thankful for the conveniences of this " life, which thou didſt give me; neither did " I preach to gain the reputation of a man of " parts; but, in compaſſion to ſouls, to pleaſe " and honour thee: my deſign was to bring " ſinners to Chriſt, and to honour thy majeſ- " ty.' To him the Lord gives a very different " anſwer, ſaying, ' Room, men! Room, an- " gels!' Let this man ' come and ſit down " with me on my throne, as I am ſat down " with my Father on his throne. He hath " owned and honoured me upon earth, and I " will own and honour him through the " ages of eternity."

The miniſters who firſt heard this repreſentation, were ſaid to have returned home, determined to renew their diligence in their maſter's ſervice. That we, who ſuſtain that honourable character, may do likewiſe; and that we may all at laſt hear the Redeemer ſay, ' Well-done, good and faithful ſervants, enter ' ye into your maſter's joy,' may GOD of his infinite mercy grant, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake, *Amen.*

The following HYMN, which was ſung immediately after the Charge, is by deſire here inſerted.

LET Zion's watchmen all awake,
And take th' alarm they give;
Now let them from the mouth of God
Their ſolemn charge receive.

'Tis not a cauſe of ſmall import
The paſtor's care demands;
But what might fill an angel's heart,
And fill'd a Saviour's hands.

They watch for ſouls, for which the Lord
Did heav'nly bliſs forego;
For ſouls, which muſt for ever live
In raptures, or in woe.

All to the great tribunal haſte,
Th' account to render there;
And ſhould'ſt thou ſtrictly mark our faults,
Lord, how ſhould we appear?

May they that Jeſus, whom they preach,
Their own Redeemer ſee;
And watch thou daily o'er their ſouls,
That they may watch for thee.

Doddridge's Hymns.

THE END.

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